

In Memoriam

HON. GERSHOM BRADFORD WESTON

DEBORAH BROWNELL WESTON

OF

DUXBURY, MASSACHUSETTS



HON. GERSHOM BRADFORD WESTON
(About 53 years of age)

3059

In Memoriam

MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER

HON. GERSHOM BRADFORD WESTON

DEBORAH BROWNELL WESTON

OF

DUXBURY, MASSACHUSETTS

Memoirs of

CAPT. EZRA WESTON (I)

EZRA WESTON (II)

GERSHOM BRADFORD WESTON

ALDEN BRADFORD WESTON

EZRA WESTON (IV)

AND

DEBORAH BROWNELL WESTON

WESTON ARMORIAL BEARINGS AND DESCENT

By

EDMUND BROWNELL WESTON

Duxbury Room

PROVIDENCE, R. I., 1916

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Duxbury Room

Preface

The writing of this Memorial is mainly due to the rereading of some old letters that my mother wrote to me when I was in South America in the latter part of 1868, and in which was expressed the desire that when an opportunity offered I would write something in an endeavor to commemorate my father's good deeds if it had not been done previously by another member of his family.

In order to make the memoir of my father as complete as possible under the circumstances, I have included memoirs of his grandfather, his father and his two brothers, and I felt I could not complete my work without adding a memoir of my mother.

The memoir of my father in particular, in order to have what I have written in accordance with facts, has necessitated much care and attention. Fortunately, my father was in the habit of talking with me from my early childhood about his past experiences and relative to the four firms, E. Weston, E. Weston & Son, Ezra Weston and E. Weston & Sons, and the recollections of these talks have materially helped me in my work. While I have several scrapbooks containing old newspaper clippings concerning my father's public life, unfortunately the dates were rarely written on the clippings and I had to make many inquiries in connection with them. When I was about

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eight years old, in looking through some manuscripts which were filed in my father's library in Duxbury, I came across his autobiography, which, even at my early age, I found to be very interesting. Shortly after discovering the autobiography I asked my mother about it and she informed me that the leading biographical publishers in the United States had asked my father for his autobiography and picture for publication and that he felt quite complimented by their request and wrote the autobiography. He then sent it to the publishers with his picture, but after they had received it they wrote to him to the effect that before publishing it they would ask him to send them a check for a substantial amount. In those days my father, I feel sure, would not have minded the expenditure of the money, but he believed that he could not maintain his manly independence if he should send it, and I can fully appreciate his feelings in the matter, and, therefore, requested the publishers to return to him the autobiography and the picture, and it was never published. I am very sorry that my father felt the way he did as if the autobiography had been published it would have been of much interest to his family and friends and of great service to me in writing this Memorial; possibly my father did not have in mind at the time how more or less history is made. Both my mother and I endeavored to preserve the manuscript autobiography above referred to, but after my mother died I could not find it; it apparently was lost or destroyed during our moving in Duxbury or when my mother left Duxbury to reside in New Bedford.

What I have written regarding my great-grandfather, grandfather and two uncles is, as will be noted, quite brief,

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but the information is all I could obtain after diligent search and inquiry.

What I have written regarding my mother is practically from memory, as all of her near relatives have passed away, and while there are many people who have spoken to me in the highest praise of my mother's personality they have not been able to give me particular information relating to the history of her early life.

While the old records of the "Lloyds" in London contain full accounts of the vessels belonging to the four Weston firms and the firms were extensively known in America and abroad in their time, there has not been very much published concerning them. I recall of having accidentally met a few years ago the author of one of the latest books pertaining to the early mercantile marine of the United States, which was then in course of preparation, and much to my surprise he did not have any particular knowledge relative to the Weston firms and I referred him to data regarding them, which he was very glad to have and which he put in his book. It is quite likely that the reason why more has not been published about the Weston firms is because their principal business was practically located and carried on in the relatively small country town of Duxbury, although they had counting rooms in Boston. The Old Colony Railroad was not completed between Boston and Plymouth until 1845, and even then Duxbury was about four miles from the nearest station on the road. Previous to 1845 practically the only means of travel between Duxbury and Boston was by horse relays on land and packets on water, and there was not any electric telegraphic service until years afterwards. The paramount

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reason, in my opinion, why more has not been published about the Weston firms is that my great-grandfather and grandfather, while sterling business men and great marine merchants, were conservative in connection with their business affairs and preferred to keep them to themselves rather than to advertise them to the world.

What I have written in regard to the Weston armorial bearings and descent was instigated by an apparent misunderstanding in the minds of more or less of our Weston family relative to the origin of the armorial bearings and the use which could be made of them by the family, and I have endeavored to explain the value of the armorial bearings in accordance with the accepted laws of heraldry.

It will be noted that more or less of what I have written in this Memorial is in the first person, and my reason for so doing is that I felt I could express myself at times more clearly and comprehensively in the first person than in the third, especially where sentiment and personal experiences are involved.

For considerable confirmatory and other information regarding my father's memoir, I am indebted to the State Librarian, Secretary of State and Adjutant-General of Massachusetts. A Weston unpublished genealogy which was prepared by my two uncles, Ezra Weston (IV) and Alden Bradford Weston, and also several old pamphlets have been of valuable assistance to me in preparing this Memorial, as well as records which have been preserved concerning the business of the four Weston firms. I have taken a great deal of trouble in endeavoring to have the illustrations as perfect as possible. Those of my great-grandfather, Ezra

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Weston (I), and grandfather, Ezra Weston (II), were reproduced from old paintings and the others were reproduced from old daguerreotypes, old photographs and the latest photographs I could obtain. The dates on the illustrations probably in more than one instance are not exact, as the originals did not have dates on them and I had to estimate the dates from personal remembrances and from the best data I could obtain.

EDMUND BROWNELL WESTON

September, 1916.